



UNITY

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Driving a neo-liberal trade deal

IF anyone needed more evidence of the imperialist nature of the European Union, the new free trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur, the predominantly right South American 'common market', epitomises it.

The agreement includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. When Donald Trump became President, the EU halted trade talks with the US and they looked for other trading allies. The 20 year old trade talks with Mercosur were resurrected; the deal has yet to be agreed by the European Parliament and EU countries.

Environmental groups have expressed concern and farmers in eleven EU countries including Ireland are opposed to the deal. Problems about beef imports and other farm products are some of the major agricultural concerns. Angus Woods of the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) argues that inferior beef will be imported from the Mercosur group and he said that it would be **"worse than a hard Brexit"**!

Joe Healy President of the IFA (web page) notes that "This deal represents a backroom deal with big business and kowtows to the likes of Mercedes and BMW in their drive to get cars into South America. It is a disgraceful and feeble sell out of a

By Lynda Walker

large part of our most valuable beef market to Latin American ranchers and factory farm unit."

Europe wants to increase access for its companies making industrial products, notably cars for which tariffs are 35 per cent, and allowing them to compete for public tenders.

The IFA say that Brazil and other South American countries completely fail to meet EU standards on the key issues of traceability, food safety, animal health and environmental controls. They say that EU Commissioner Phil Hogan is turning a blind eye to the "double standards and environmental degradation in Brazil". Concern about deforestation and the ecosystem is backed up by environmental group Greenpeace who said the deal was a "disaster for the environment on both sides of the Atlantic."

The EU is already Mercosur's biggest trade and investment partner and it's second largest for trade in goods. In terms of tariff reduction, it could be the EU's most lucrative trade deal to date, with the savings potentially four times greater than for deals with Canada and Japan combined. The agreement made in Brussels is described by the media as "an ambitious, balanced and compre-

hensive agreement"!

Argentina's Foreign Ministry said the agreement "will mean the integration of a market of some 800 million people, nearly a fourth of the world's gross domestic product and more than \$100bn in bilateral trade of goods and services." Argentina also intends to strengthen political and cultural ties with the EU. This can include the politics of transferring economic, financial, and even policy making powers upwards, from 'democratically' elected national parliaments and governments to the EU level.

Brazil's President, Jair Bolsonaro (democracy personified), tweeted that the deal was historic and one of the most important trade agreements of all time. Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, echoed similar views.

"Get Ireland out of the EU" should be the demand now. Agricultural minister Michael Creed received an angry reception at the agricultural show in Cork last weekend and who knows what action the French and other farmers will take.

There is no reform of the EU: "From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism-ie the export of capital and the decision of the world, by 'advanced' and 'civilised' colonial powers-a United States of Europe under capitalism is either impossible or reactionary"

Editorial

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Some concerns

THE media has obviously been dominated by the Tory Party leadership contest.

Coming not far behind were the BBC's Spotlight revelations concerning another paid for holiday taken by Ian Paisley jnr and his family.

We also had the news that Bombardier has sold its regional jets aircraft division to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

The fact that trade unions representing workers, and it is rumoured local management, were the last to know doesn't bode well for the company's future. Susan Fitzgerald of Unite made the point that while both Bombardier and Mitsubishi have been talking up the possible benefits of such a deal, no assurance has been provided to workers in Northern Ireland.

We also learn that Ballylumford and Kilroot power stations have been acquired by another foreign outfit, namely EPH, based in the Czech Republic.

However we can all sleep soundly in our beds as we are informed that the European Commission has approved the acquisition.

However, one headline that did catch the eye was that there has been a ten-fold increase in the number using St Patrick's soup kitchen on Donegall Street since it opened two years ago.

One of the volunteers staffing the kitchen said that the need is "so dire" that it might open on weekdays during the summer to ensure children are fed while schools are closed.

The first weekend it opened 20 meals were served, that has increased to around 250.

Other services being provided are a food and clothes bank. It is reported that the range of people coming to the kitchen is much wider and includes families with young children.

SDLP councillor, Paul Cusker has made the point that welfare reforms including Universal Credit have had crippling financial impact on some people.

It seems that hardship and hunger are a bleak reality for some but that should be the concern for everybody.

Remembering Maggie Gibb

In memory of Margaret (Maggie) Gibb, (County Antrim and Loughborough) 01.04.1954– 27.06.2019

Loving wife, mother and grandmother to Andy, Helen, Jonathan, Andrew, Sarah, Ellie, Nathan, Ivy and Caitlin.

An intelligent, inspirational, irreplaceable, kind, thoughtful and funny Belfast woman to her very core.

Visitor to the Soviet Union 1984 and multiple CPI work details at Fete de L'Humanite in 1980's.

Maggie was one of the first Irish women to help smuggle alcohol into France in her day (CPI fund raising.)

She also helped smuggle Francs and cheese back to Ireland in the 1980's.


Our world has stopped. Our hearts are broke.

Funeral arrangements to follow."

Comrades and friends of Andy Gibb are shocked to hear of the sudden death of Margaret (Maggie) his wife, last week.

We send our deepest condolences to Andy, their children, grandchildren and wider family and friends

**TRIBUTE TO THE BELFAST INTERNATIONAL BRIGADERS
INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL LECTURE**



12:00 - 14:15
LIGHT LUNCH 12.00 PM

09.08.2019

**100 YEARS AFTER THE CALEDON LOCK OUT
BY DR FEARGHAL MAC BHLOSCAIDH**

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL. BOOKING ADVISED: SHANKILL ROAD LIBRARY
298-300 SHANKILL ROAD BT13 2BN: 02890509232

**THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE
MEMORIAL LECTURE**
9TH AUGUST 2019 | 12:00 - 14:15

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADERS WHO WENT TO FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN WOULD HAVE IDENTIFIED WITH STRUGGLES OF THE WORKERS WHO AFTER THE 1ST WORLD WAR FACED HARSH CONDITIONS. STRIKES TOOK PLACE IN BELFAST, CALEDON, DUNGANNON AND ALL ACROSS IRELAND.

THIS PRESENTATION EXAMINES THE SITUATION THAT MOTIVATED PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC WORKERS IN CALEDON, TO JOIN A TRADE UNION, TO STRIKE AND TO UNITE IN THE FIGHT FOR LABOUR RIGHTS.

ORGANISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE AS PART OF THE PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL-FÉILE AN PHOBAIL
DESIGNED BY THEHISTORYTROUPE.ORG

**Tribute to the Belfast
International Brigaders**
**Guest Speaker: Dr Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh will give a
Presentation: "100 Years after the Caledon Lockout"**
Friday 9th August 12. 00 pm to 14.15 pm
Light Lunch 12.00 pm
Free and open to all.
Booking advised: Shankill Road Library
**Organised by the International Brigades Commemoration as part of
Féile an Phobail, The People's
Festival 2019**

**YES
TO
PEACE!**



**NO
TO
NATO!**

**FÉILE AN PHOBAIL-THE PEOPLES FESTIVAL
2019**

GUEST SPEAKER **DR ED HORGAN**, FORMER UN PEACEKEEPER AND IRISH VETERANS FOR PEACE.

THURSDAY, 6TH AUGUST AT 7.00 PM. THE DUKE OF YORK, COMMERCIAL COURT OFF DONEGALL STREET, BELFAST.



ON THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF NATO, THE PEACE AND NEUTRALITY ALLIANCE WISHES TO INVITE YOU TO AN EVENING OF PROTEST AND SOLIDARITY.

MUSIC BY THE NON-FUNDAMENTALIST ENVIRONMENTALIST SINGER AND MUSICIAN **TEKNOPEASANT**.

ORGANIZED BY PEACE AND NEUTRALITY ALLIANCE (NI).
FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT: panasteeringcommittee@gmail.com
07751951785



**YES TO
PEACE NO
TO NATO**
**Protest
Against
70 years of
NATO**
**Duke of
York
Belfast**
**8th August
7 pm**
**Guest
speaker
and
Music**



Lessons from the Cuban Revolution

26 July is the most important date on Cuba's revolutionary calendar. Patriotic and revolutionary fervour grips the nation, and streets are covered with communist banners, posters and official graffiti. The date is the anniversary of Fidel Castro's ill-fated 1953 attack on Santiago de Cuba's Moncada Barracks, and the birth of Cuban writer and patriot Jose Martí. Fidel's attack in 1953 failed and the dictator, Batista, was not actually overthrown until 1959. However, the date is when the movement started that eventually became the Cuban Revolution. At the Moncada barracks in Santiago, the names of the martyrs of the revolution are read out and guns are fired. Speeches from Cuba's leaders are broadcast on all national television stations.

Here Graham Harrington examines the lessons from that Revolution.

THE Cuban Revolution did not begin as a socialist revolution; in fact the original Cuban communist party, the PSP (People's Socialist Party), denounced the attack on the Moncada Barracks in 1953 as a "putsch," and, while engaging with the rebels during the guerilla campaign, it did not fully align with them, believing instead in building mass support in the cities.

After the overthrow of Batista, the PSP and the 26th of July Movement moved closer together and eventually formed the Communist Party of Cuba.

The Communist Party, then as now, is not an electoral party; it does not stand candidates in the national, provincial and municipal elections held regularly in Cuba.

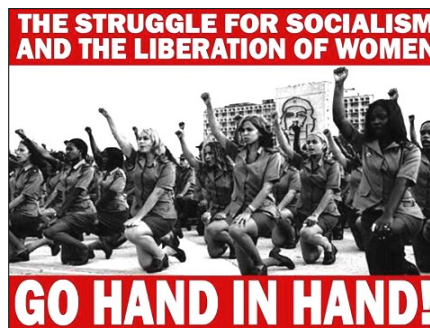
Its members, however, do work within the mass organisations, such as the Federation of Cuban Women and the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, which have a presence in nearly every Cuban street and tower block.

This has enabled the Communist Party keep its guiding role within society, without a reliance on electoral success - something to ponder on for those in Ireland who maintain illusions about a parliamentary road to socialism.

Education is one of the pillars of the Revolution, with all education provided as a right to all citizens, free of charge. Cuba spends more of its GDP on education - 13 per

cent - than any other country in the world.

It also leads the world in medical care, with the emphasis on preventive medicine, provided by doctors who live among the people they serve.



Women make up a majority of parliamentarians, the second-highest proportion in the world.

More than 60 per cent of university students are women, as are the majority of professionals.

This is assisted by state-subsidised abortion and child services as well as education programmes that make men share the domestic duties, such as cleaning, cooking, and looking after children - something that has allowed Cuban men also to break free of the negative effects of traditional roles.

These achievements make the Cuban standard of living very

attractive to those living in the Global South.

Travelling through Cuba, one will not find people living in overcrowded barrios, run by armed gangs peddling drugs and prostitution - in fact drugs of all kinds, including marijuana, are illegal; instead one will find people content to socialise in their communities, with children playing even into the late evenings in the back streets of Havana, free from concern.

This is in stark contrast to the everyday life of others in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

Cuba, a small country of 11 million people, has always lent the hand of friendship to other peoples.

Cuban internationalist volunteers were instrumental in preventing apartheid South Africa and the West from defeating the national liberation movements in Angola and Namibia, with the Cuban-led military victory at the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale being a turning-point in that conflict and contributing to the downfall of apartheid.

Cuban medical volunteers keep up that tradition, whether it be those who took part in Operation Miracle in Venezuela or those who assisted in treating Ebola victims in Africa.

These achievements, impressive in any context, have meant that Cuba is a prime target of US imperialism, which has maintained an illegal blockade on the country since shortly after the Revolution.

The blockade differs from an embargo, in that it prevents third-party countries from trading with Cuba, meaning that the importing of materials as diverse as oil and pencils is either extremely expensive or, in some cases, impossible.

The cost of the blockade is in the hundreds of billions, and prevents Cuba from achieving even more successes, not to mention depriving the world of Cuban expertise in the fields of health and education.

The linchpin in the transformation of the Cuban Revolution from a democratic to an explicitly socialist revolution was the experiences of the people in the democratic struggle itself, with the role of the United States in propping up Batista becoming more and more obvious, as was the role of the criminal Cuban bourgeoisie as a dependant on foreign capital.

The Agrarian Reform, one of the first major policies of the revolution, proved to be much more than a mere reform or tinkering with the system.

It eliminated large landholdings and thus, to quote an article in *Granma*, the Communist Party's daily paper, "led to greater

transformations within the Revolution and, for some scholars, established its agrarian, anti-imperialist, democratic-popular character, since the awarding of land to those who worked it affected not only Cuban latifundistas [big landowners] but foreign owners of huge estates as well, especially from the United States."

This was a transformative demand, which matched where Cubans were in their political consciousness but also allowed them to increase their standing in society and give them the confidence to challenge the system at its strategic weak points.

This allowed the revolution to combine political-economic demands with a patriotic position.

It was the unfinished business of the Cuban War of Independence, which ended in 1898, and in keeping with the life of José Martí.

It was the risen people who came from this struggle that endured the "Special Period" (the disastrous effects of the overthrow of socialism in the USSR and eastern Europe in 1989-91) and today continue to build a socialism that, while proud of its past, is looking to the future.

Successful revolutions are never-ending, and the Cuban Revolution does not plan to moderate any time soon.

**Madge Davison
Memorial Lecture
Friday 2nd August
18.15-20.30 pm:
THE RED AND THE
GREEN**

**Guest Speaker:
Clare Bailey: Leader of
the Green Party NI
Clare will give a critical
analysis of the environ-
mental problems facing us
to day**

***"We only want the Earth"*
Venue: St Mary's College,
Falls Road
Organised by the
Communist Party of
Ireland as part of Féile an
Phobail - The People's
Festival 2019**

